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ABSTRACT

This document discusses Project HOLD, a Title VI-G Child Service Demonstration Center which was established as a cooperative effort between Northeast Louisiana University and the Ouachita Parish School System. The primary purpose of the project is to plan, explore, implement, and refine a program for students in grades 7 through 12 who have been diagnosed as learning disabled, that is, those who exhibit average, above average, or potentially average intelligence but who fail to achieve in one or more of the following areas: reading, arithmetic, spelling, and handwriting. They also display perceptual-language deficiencies. They do not have other handicaps, physical or emotional. The second purpose is to provide a teacher training program for secondary-school personnel and for others interested in working with learning-disabled students, and the third major purpose is to provide community service through in-service workshops for interested school personnel, university personnel, parents, and interested citizens. (LL)

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PROJECT HOLD: A SECONDARY LEARNING DISABILITY PROJECT

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Project HOLD is a Title VI-G Child Service Demonstration Center (CSDC) which was established as a cooperative effort between Northeast Louisiana University and the Ouachita Parish School System. It is one of eighteen centers established in the United States to become a prototype and dissemination agency for the secondary schools. The first year of the project was completed in June.

I The Students

The primary purpose of Project HOLD is to plan, explore, implement and refine a program for students grades 7 through 12 who have been diagnosed as learning disabled. The potential population to be served is so cumbersome that it was determined that the first year of the program would involve one school system with the participating schools and public school personnel designated by the Superintendent in consultation with the Project Director, Dr. Levelle Haynes, Director of Special Education Center at the University. The second year the Project will serve two school systems and the third year will expand to the entire area served by the Special Education Center, twelve school systems.

The children being served are those in selected schools who exhibit average or above average or potentially average intelligence who fail to achieve in one or more of the areas of reading, arithmetic, spelling or handwriting. They also display perceptual-language deficiencies and <u>do not</u>

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have other handicaps, physical or emotional. The assignment to a special class is made after referral by the classroom teacher, guidance counselor, parent or self-referral for an initial screening by Project Personnel with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, the Slosson Intelligence Test and clinical observation to determine whether the student has average or potentially average intelligence. If the student appears to be of average intelligence and demonstrates a desire to improve his or her academic performance, a complete psycho-social-educational-language evaluation is conducted by a parish Diagnostic Team or the Special Education Center.

The competent authority team is composed of the following: a social worker, a psychologist, a speech and hearing therapist and an educational consultant. A social history of the student is obtained from information on the school referral form and in an informal parent interview. The information obtained includes medical and developmental histories, family and peer relationships, and the parent's view of the child's learning disability.

Instruments used to obtain an assessment of psychological, educational and language ability levels are: an individual intelligence test (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - WISC-R: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - WAIS: or Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale - Form L-M; the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test; Memory for Designs; Jersild's Questions and a well known projective. The educational measures used are the Wide Range Achievement Test, Peabody Individual Achievement Test, Wepman Auditory Discrimination Test, and the Titmus Screening Test, a standardized battery. Informal educational measures used are knowledge of the alphabet, word recognition inventory, word attack skills inventory and an informal reading inventory, if needed. The speech, hearing and language assessment battery are an audiometric evaluation,

Goldman-Fristoe Articulation Test, Templin-Darley Test of Articulation, Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (selected subtests), Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Stanford-Binet Language Test and Utah Test of Language Development. The Diagnostic Team then meets for a staffing of the child's case at which time they compile results of testing, recommendations for the school, the parent and the child; and the results of the diagnosis are reported to the parents by the social worker.

If the Diagnostic Team determines that the student has a learning disability, consideration for specific help is planned for the student according to his degree of academic deficiency. A revision of the Harris formula (M.A. - 5 - Expected Reading Level) is used to determine the Deficiency Difference (D.D.); that is, grade level in reading and/or math minus five. The resulting figure is an estimate of the number of years deficit existing between actual achievement and potential achievement.

The student remains in the regular classroom if the Deficiency Difference is less than two years. The classroom teachers are provided with suggestions for meeting the needs of the student. If the difference is two years, the student attends the resource room for one period daily at two of the schools where resource room teachers are employed and every other day in two schools where a resource teacher is employed to alternate between the schools. The student stays in the resource room for two periods if the academic deficiency is three years. For the student with a deficit of four or more years or one who is judged by the Diagnostic Team to need intensive individualized instruction, arrangements are made to transport the student to Northeast Louisiana University where he is given intensive remedial instruction with one of two clinical teachers. Travel expenses to and from the University are paid to the

parents through state Special Education funds. There are a total of 97 students in the project; 17 in the regular classroom, 23 in the resource room, 49 in the partial day program and 8 in the clinical program.

Evaluation of the students' work is shared with the classroom teacher and grades are assigned in the academic subjects being taught with the classroom teacher and special teacher cooperatively responsible for grades. Each student is viewed as an individual and a developmental approach is used to insure that perceptual problems are treated.

The California Achievement Test battery has been administered to all identified learning disabled students and was readministered at the end of the school year to determine progress. The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale was also administered and was readministered to determine whether a change occurs in the students' opinion of himself.

The results of the posttesting show that there was no significant gain in Total Reading or Reading Comprehension for any group, while the resource room students made significant gains in Reading Vocabulary. All of the students except those in the regular classroom made significant gains in Total Math, Math Computation, Math Concepts and Problems and Total Language on the California Achievement Test. For all of the subtests of the test, there was considerable variation in the gains made by students within each group. For every group the posttest self-concept mean was higher than the pretest mean. However, only the clinical group showed a significant difference.

An informal evaluation of the Project was conducted (an open-ended questionnaire) with the students, teachers and parents involved. Participation in Project HOLD will hopefully achieve the following results: (1) more success in academics; (2) better self-image; (3) improved attitude toward school; and (4) preparation for future goals.

II Teacher - Education

The second purpose of Project HOLD is to provide a teacher training program for secondary school personnel and others interested in working with learning disabled students. This purpose has been accomplished by implementation of a program in Special Education at the University which will meet the State Department of Education requirements for certification in Learning Disabilities; a series of in-service education programs at the selected school sites to acquaint the staff with characteristics of students with learning disabilities by Project personnel; and consultative assistance to those teachers requesting such by Project staff. Enrichment of project personnel has been provided through visitation to exemplary programs; attendance at local, state, regional and national conferences; weekly meetings to discuss necessary modifications based on experiences and study distribution of magazine articles and other publications; and sharing of materials and ideas.

The courses required for certification being offered for graduate or undergraduate credit in the area of Learning Disabilities were taught by the Curriculum Specialist who has experience in the L.D. classroom on the secondary level. They are the basic core required for a special education option plus the following: (1) Characteristics and Needs of the Learning Disabled; (2) Methods and Materials for the Learning Disabled; (3) Language Development; and (4) Practicum in Learning Disabilities. The first semester there were 32 enrolled in the course and the second semester 47 were enrolled. This is an indication of the professional interest in this area. It is anticipated that participation in the retraining program will result in the teachers being prepared to work as resource persons in the schools or in clinical settings as educational consultants. The competencies learned will include an ability to diagnose and remediate learning disabilities with the

older students and an understanding of the need to establish and carry out in-service education in the schools.

III Community Service

The third major purpose of the Project is to provide community service through in-service workshops for interested school personnel, university personnel, parents and interested citizenry. The workshops are planned and evaluated by the Advisory Council, a group of 14 community leaders representing many disciplines - law, pharmacy, medicine, the clergy, optometry, retired volunteers, a family therapist (psychologist), a director of a private L.D. school, television and news media, and parents. This group meets once a month to discuss the progress of the Project and make suggestions for further service.

The workshops were held once a month at the University. Experts in the field of Learning Disabilities were contacted and asked to present lectures and demonstrations on various aspects of learning disabilities, educational practices and hints for parents for management of L.D. Children. Some of the presenters have been Mrs. Ruth Edgington, University of Arkansas Medical Center; Project IRIS, a federally funded individualized reading instruction system; Mrs. Jo Anne Brown, a Project Director in El Dorado, Arkansas; and Dr. Mario Pascale, Executive Director of the Marianne Frostig Center of Educational Therapy.

Brochures and interviews with various media in the community and contact with key personnel in related disciplines have been accomplished. It is anticipated that the seminars and information disseminated will result in an

informed public with better understanding of L.D. children, and an understanding of the parent and/or community role in the public support and participation in securing programs needed for children with learning disabilities. Dr. Hyman Gardsbane, former national President of the A.C.L.D. (Association for Children With Learning Disabilities), helped organize a local chapter of this organization.

The unique feature of Project HOLD is the cooperation between the University and the public schools to provide a needed program for the students being served; a teacher retraining program; and community service. Revisions, modifications and innovations are in the planning stages for the ensuing years.

Next year the project will serve Ouachita Parish and Monroe City Schools to establish more L.D. classes on the secondary levels. In addition, Project staff will provide in-service education for the area served by the University Special Education Center as requested. Within three years 500 secondary students will be served through this Project.